

FINAL MEETING SUMMARY

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING *May 31, 2006 Lewiston, ID*

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This is only a summary of issues and actions in this meeting. It may not represent the fullness of ideas discussed or opinions given, and should not be used as a substitute for actual public involvement or public comment on any particular topic unless specifically identified as such.

Welcome and Introductions

Norma Jean Germond, Public Involvement and Communications Committee (PIC) Chair, welcomed the committee and introductions were made. The committee adopted the February 2006 meeting summary.

Public Budget Meetings

The committee discussed the public budget meetings held recently around the region. The committee did not think it was a good strategy to have only one agency spokesperson representing all the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies at public budget meetings.

Agency and Regulator Perspective

Karen Lutz, Department of Energy-Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL), clarified the agency representation strategy only applied to the public budget meetings and not to other public meetings; the agencies will evaluate its effectiveness and how it was received at the end of the fiscal year. She said they would like feedback [from the committee] on the strategy.

Dennis Faulk, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), said it is too early to evaluate the strategy's success, and thinks we need to see how the Department of Energy-Headquarters (DOE-HQ) receives and responds to what they heard from the regulators and the public. He reminded the committee that advice is the best and most accountable way to affect DOE and agency operations.

Committee Discussion

- Greg deBruler stated that one agency representative at the budget meetings is not sufficient, and that all agencies need to have a representative present. Helen Wheatley agreed – the agencies need to speak for themselves.
- *How can the public compel DOE to request more funding?* Jim Trombold doubted that comments from a public meeting would compel DOE to request more funding, and that they would only do so if directed by Congress. Dennis Faulk said EPA uses enforcement actions to compel DOE and keep them compliant. Dennis also said it used to be easier to shift money around from one project to another, but now there is not enough funding for that to be an effective strategy. Nolan Curtis, Department of Ecology (Ecology), added that the public could use their state delegations to use Congress to compel DOE. He noted that Hanford funding appears extremely large already, especially when compared to other cleanup sites. Since many cleanup sites are reaching completion, Congress may be hesitant to allocate funding. Nolan also said that Hanford's 2007 budget is high compared to average DOE cleanup sites, but low for Hanford-level cleanup.
- Susan Leckband noted that the Board cannot lobby Congress; the Board can take action through advice to the agencies, particularly to the regulators. For example, the Board can advise that more and better-enforced milestones are needed. However, the organizations Board members represent can lobby Congress.
- Karen Lutz said when they roll out the budget outreach strategy, they do a synopsis of what DOE heard at the public budget meetings and from the Board. DOE also utilizes a website to post the information. She said DOE and the agencies want transparent feedback from the PIC and the Board on the budget meeting mechanisms used this year.
- Greg deBruler said that engagement with the public is key and a static website is insufficient. He also asked if the agencies had received feedback yet about the budget meetings.

The committee agreed that each agency should have a representative at the budget meetings, as at all public meetings. The committee discussed preparing cumulative advice for agency representation and on the new mechanisms for public outreach for the September Board meeting.

Other Public Involvement Meetings

Norma Jean Germond asked the committee how effective other public involvement meetings were, such as the Tank Closure and Waste Management (TC&WM) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) public meetings that were held in March.

Committee Discussion

- Helen Wheatley thought the State of Oregon should have had more time to present at the Portland meeting. She did not like that Dirk Dunning only had a few minutes to speak. Susan Leckband said the Oregon Department of Energy submitted formal comments.
- *Are comments given in one forum that are relevant to another forwarded on to the appropriate responsible agency?* Gerry Pollet wanted to be sure that comments made in a particular forum be included and addressed by the appropriate agency or issue manager. He said it was important that comments captured at the Seattle TC&WM EIS scoping

meetings that related to the budget be taken as budget comments, not just for the TC&WM EIS. Gerry said the public does not know how to differentiate.

- Todd agreed with Gerry, saying that hurdles are reduced if the public is not forced to understand minute scoping laws.
- Susan Leckband asked if a member of the public were to come to a TC&WM EIS meeting and provide an unrelated comment, *would the comment be included?*
- Tim Hill said he would look into it and see if it is permissible. He also agreed that the easier for the public to comment, the better. He thought there might be legal issues about accepting comments at a meeting specified for a different topic.
- Sharon Braswell said she would also check to see if comments were received and being tracked.
- Greg deBruler thought there was a commitment to accept and appropriately route all comments, saying that Marybeth Burandt, Department of Energy-Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP), said they would accept all comments and pass them on to the relevant manager. He described it as a “harvest” of comments. Sharon Braswell, DOE-ORP, said she would check on it.
- Karen Lutz said they forwarded comments from a CERCLA workshop on to the appropriate people, and indicated it on the website.
- Helen Wheatley said there should be a way to capture principles and values at public meetings. Often the public does not know what an EIS scoping meeting is, but they come in with feelings they want to express. Norma Jean thought that the Portland meeting provided an opportunity to do so.
- Greg deBruler thought all meetings should be clearer about their purpose. This would reduce the confusion of statements made and where to make them.

State of the Site Meetings Proposal

Norma Jean Germond introduced the State of the Site (SOS) meeting format, as proposed by the agencies at the Tri-Party Agencies Quarterly meeting. The proposed draft format included an informal “Marketplace of Ideas,” providing the public with multiple stakeholder perspectives and information about key Hanford projects and progress. A “Hanford Dialogue” portion would give the public the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue with the TPA agency leadership. It would also overlap in time with the “Marketplace of Ideas,” and allow for Hanford managers to hear concerns directly from the public. As a wrap-up, there would be “TPA Agency Leadership Feedback” where the leadership would report back on what they heard to the entire audience. Norma Jean explained that DOE was attempting to move away from the long presentations of agency “talking heads,” which often go too long, dominating the meeting and losing public interest.

Agency and Regulator Perspective

Nolan Curtis said they were trying to adhere to the core ideas of what the SOS meetings are about, and that he thought a priority was providing the public with a face-to-face opportunity with agency leadership. He acknowledged he saw the potential for diminished accountability, which is why they formatted the “wrap-up” session so the leadership can relay back to the public what they heard during the face-to-face portion, and the public can correct them if needed. He said a frequent comment was that it took too long to get to the public comment portion.

Karen said this is the agencies’ general strategy and they would like the committee’s feedback; the agencies would like to see how it goes this year. She said the committee and Board should tell them if they want the agency heads at the front of the room taking questions from the public.

Committee Discussion

- Helen Wheatley asked if the new format was created because agency heads are unable to shorten their presentations to approximately five minutes. *Is the solution to have a strong facilitator ensuring presentations are kept short?* If it is possible to shorten the presentations, then they might be able to keep the old format. She thought strong facilitation is necessary regardless of the format.
- Dennis Faulk did not think last year’s meetings went well because there were too many speakers and they did not adhere to their time limits. He agreed that accountability could be viewed as a potential problem in the proposed new format. Helen agreed, and spoke for the committee by saying she thinks the new format lacks suitable accountability.
- Charlie Weems said *principles, priorities, and values need to be gathered from the public, and that a facilitator-led, problem-oriented meeting is the solution.* This will also allow for the leadership to answer questions.
- Sharon Braswell wanted to clarify why the agencies wanted to change the format. At a previous Seattle meeting, they set up displays beforehand, which is similar to the “Marketplace of Ideas” portion of the proposed format. They are trying a different approach to allow the public a chance to talk to the decision-makers because public feedback indicated that there was far too much presentation.
- Nancy Murray thought it was inconvenient to schedule meetings during the dinner hour, and that the meeting agenda is too long and runs too late into the evening [proposed format scheduled until 9:30 pm]. She said it is a priority to have a “do-able” meeting for the public with strong facilitation.
- Greg voiced concern about not having a “one size fits all” meeting format. He said the Hood River meetings worked very well and should not be changed. Dennis said they should capture that in advice as a value. Greg said he could work with the agencies to create a good formula for Hood River and one that could be flexible to match the needs of other meeting locations.
- Jim Trombold thought it was too cumbersome for the committee to give particular advice on format or style of meetings. He also said that interest groups should not dominate too much of public meeting time.
- Helen Wheatley said it is important to articulate what the PIC committee and the Board think makes for a good meeting, and she thought developing advice would be the way to

do so. Dennis Faulk hoped the committee would develop advice. He also indicated that the agencies were not pleased with last year's meetings, which is why a new format was proposed. He thought outlining the need for accountability and what made past meetings successful in advice would be helpful.

- Nolan confirmed that SOS meetings are typically before the holiday season in the fall, about six months after the budget cycle.
- Gerry questioned why the proposal was not sent to the committee ahead of time; Dennis said they were still working on it up until the day before the committee meeting.
- Gerry said the presented format has not significantly changed since the February committee meeting. The model of people not being able to hear each other's comments is not acceptable, as they discussed at the February meeting. Gerry thought the agencies wanted to avoid people asking what has changed from last year, and thought the format was designed to avoid tough public spotlight questions.
- Kenneth Gasper commented that while it is important to have a problem-centered agenda, the public should have the opportunity to ask about issues they want to discuss, and not have the agenda totally decided by the agencies. Charlie clarified that he did not mean that DOE should pick the problems to be discussed.
- Norma Jean said there had not been a dialogue with the agencies since February to develop a better format, and that the committee needs to communicate better with the agencies to develop an acceptable format. Nolan said they have been haggling over the format for months, and they should have communicated better with the committee because they suspected the accountability issue would be a problem. He said he now has a platform to take that back to management.
- Karen Lutz asked the committee to think about how they measure success, and what may be successful to DOE may not be successful to the committee. She also said timing is critical; the SOS meetings are typically scheduled for the fall, and it is important to get advice crafted for the September Board meeting so it can be used in planning the SOS meetings.
- Barb Wise asked what the committee wanted from the Board, and what the intent of a report was – she agreed that time is critical.
- Gerry Pollet thought the committee needed to draft advice and read some draft text that included asking the agencies to form the agenda around three to five problem areas, and give the public the chance to address questions and comments to all four agency leaders with the public hearing the responses of all four leaders. He said this model worked exceptionally well in the early years of the SOS meetings. He said that the SOS model should ensure accountability for responding to public values and concerns. He also said he thought the proposal presented by the agencies appeared designed to avoid accountability by avoiding public presentation of concerns and the public hearing agencies' leaders' responses and commitments. He said the new format proposal precluded the ability of sick workers to present concerns about workers compensation and health and safety. He said strict time limits for presenters were necessary, fostered by strong facilitation, and that the presentations should be focused on issues previously agreed upon.

- Karen said the agencies would like advice on how to refine the current proposal.
- Susan Leckband said she did not think they should go back to the “old way” of SOS meetings. She thought a modification of the proposal would serve their needs well. She said while she has sympathy for sick workers and believes they need a forum to present their concerns and needs, she did not think an SOS meeting was the appropriate place. She said information should be provided at the SOS meetings directing injured workers to the correct source for assistance.
- Shelley Cimon said the SOS meeting format should have been collaboratively worked out months ago. The urgency to develop advice in one day would have been eliminated, and the committee would be more assured of the agencies actually integrating and considering the advice.
- Norma Jean agreed with Shelley and said that the process is broken down if they have to come up with advice overnight; she hopes they can communicate better in the future.
- Beverly Penney, a member of the public wondered why injured workers would address questions to the agencies rather than their employers.

TPA Public Involvement Evaluation Process

The TPA Public Involvement Evaluation Process was not discussed because of the extended SOS meeting discussion.

Helen Wheatley was disappointed that it was not addressed and felt that it keeps falling off the agenda and being forgotten.

Committee Business

The committee decided on the following principles necessary for a successful State of the Site meeting:

- Accountability
- Strong facilitation
- Full agency representation
- Meetings focused on principles, priorities, and values
- Problem identification
- Mutually agreed upon problem-centered meetings
- Limited formal presentation length (agencies and interest groups), in time and number, to provide public ample opportunity to speak

These principles will be integrated into draft advice presented to the Board. Norma Jean Germond, Helen Wheatley, Gerry Pollet, and Jim Trombold will work on developing advice for committee and Board consensus.

Attendees

HAB Members and Alternates

Shelley Cimon	Jerri Main	Helen Wheatley
Greg deBruler	Todd Martin	
Earl Fordham	Susan Leckband	
Kenneth Gasper	Gerry Pollet	
Norma Jean Germond	Jim Trombold	
Steve Hudson	Charles Weems	

Others

Karen Lutz, DOE-RL	Nolan Curtis, Ecology	Karen Caddey, CH2MHill
Sharon Braswell, DOE-ORP	Tim Hill, Ecology	Joy Shoemake, CH2MHill
	Dennis Faulk, EPA	Hillary Johnson, EnviroIssues
		Cathy McCague, EnviroIssues
		Barbara Wise, Fluor Hanford
		Beverly Penney, CTUIR